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11 February 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Publications Procurement Situation in Moscow

1. A meeting was held this date in the office of the Executive, CD, with [REDACTED] present to debrief [REDACTED] who has recently returned from Moscow.

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2. The following information resulted from the discussion:

- a. Back issues of newspapers and periodicals are not available.
- b. In general, books older than 1951 are not available in bookstores with the exception of popular literature.
- c. A considerable volume of older material is available in provincial bookstores, but practically nothing of a scholarly, scientific, or technical nature.
- d. There is no possibility of obtaining from bookstores and newsstands items which are turned down by the official book and subscription agencies; in other words, if it is not available for export, it is not carried by the newsstands.
- e. [REDACTED] has been very aggressive in repeating his requirements on subsequent days after he has been turned down. This procedure has proved successful in some instances and should be continued. A protest from Washington on any items which are denied would help strengthen [REDACTED] hand.
- f. Restrictions on the number of copies allowed for sale are not so much a matter of government policy as inefficiency on the part of personnel handling orders.
- g. There is practically no possibility of getting additional slots for another PPO or clerical help in Moscow as there are no adequate living quarters or other accommodations for more people than are already there.

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3. Suggestions made by [REDACTED]

- a. All orders to PPO Moscow should be in the Russian alphabet and in such format that they can be handed to clerks in bookstores.
- b. It is beyond the capabilities of the PPO to handle a great mass of orders such as the two thousand items requested by Agriculture recently. Requesters should be very selective and should submit their orders a few at a time.

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c. Helsinki is a possible source of Soviet publications and it might be justifiable to have an ad hoc PPO appointed there; however, books appear in Helsinki shops several months after their publication in Moscow and those published in small editions which are soon sold out may never reach bookstores outside the Soviet Union.

d. Concerning travel, it was pointed out that much of the year's travel will be done in the spring and requirements such as those for Oblast newspapers should be forwarded to Moscow before the travel season starts. Such papers are never available in Moscow and can be obtained only by picking them up at railroad newsstands.

e. A lot of the time of the PPO and his clerk is taken up in sorting mail, logging it in, and making distribution within the Embassy to the service attaches who then prepare cover sheets and transmit the publications to Washington. The possibility of having all newspapers and periodicals shipped to one central point in Washington and distributed here rather than in Moscow should be explored. Any relief which can be given to the PPO or his clerk in Moscow in functions which could just as well be performed in Washington will be beneficial in allowing the PPO more time to perform procurement functions. On the matter of field coordination, [REDACTED] 25X1A9A pointed out that the Ambassador is the only one who can effect coordination. He suggested that a memorandum to Mr. Bohlen or Mr. O'Shaughnessy which has been coordinated with the Army, Navy, and Air Attache headquarters in Washington and the Chief, EE, in State, pointing out just what the various collectors in Moscow should do and specific suggestions for eliminating duplication and promoting coordination might be effective. He pointed out also that Mr. O'Shaughnessy is due for replacement and a thorough briefing of his successor prior to departure for Moscow would be in order.

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